

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1425
/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE 332
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7157

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IN, AF, PERP
SUBJECT: GOI VIEWS ON AFGHANISTAN

1. POL COUNSELOR MET AFTERNOON MAY 4 WITH MEA JOINT
SECRETARY I.P. SINGH TO DISCUSS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
AFGHANISTAN. WE HAVE BEEN IN FREQUENT TOUCH WITH HIM
BY PHONE SINCE APRIL 27, WHEN WE WERE THE FIRST TO TELL
HIM OF TROUBLE REPORTED FROM KABUL. THAT HE AGREED TO THE
APPOINTMZNT AT UNUSUALLY SHORT NOTICE STRUCK US AS FURTHER
REFLECTION OF MEA'S INTEREST IN KEEPING IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH
US ON AFGHAN EVENTS.

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2. IN DISCUSSING THE COMPLEXION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, SINGH
WAS INCLINED TO STRESS ITS NATIONALIST PORTENTIAL RATHER THAN
ITS COMMUNIST CREDENTIALS. HE READILY ACKNOWLEDGED, OF
COURSE, THAT THE KHALQ WAS PRO-MOSCOW, THE INDIANS CALCULATED
THAT A MAJORITY OF THE NEW CABINET MEMEBERS WERE COMMUNISTS.
(ACCORDING TO SINGH, THE INDIANS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT 12 CIVILIAN

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET ARE COMMUNISTS. TO THIS THEY ADD THE THREE MILITARY MEMBERS, FOR A TOTAL OF 15 OF 21.) BUT, OBVIOUSLY USING TERMS WHICH HAD BEEN THOUGHT OUT QUITE CAREFULLY, HE MAINTAINED THAT IT WAS THE INDIAN IMPRESSION THAT THE NEW LEADERS WERE "RADICAL SOCIALISTS" RATHER THAN "DIEHARD MARXISTS." HE SAID THAT WHILE THEY OBVIOUSLY WERE PRO-SOVIET THEY WOULD, LIKE OTHER AFGHAN GOVERNMENTS, WANT TO MAINTAIN A POSTURE INDEPENDENT OF MOSCOW. HE NOTED THAT IT WAS THE IMPRESSION OF PEOPLE WHO HAD KNOWN TARAKI AND BABRAK KARMAL THAT THEY WERE CAREFUL PEOPLE WHO WOULD ACT WITH CIRCUMSPECTION. THEY WOULD NOT "LEAP INTO ANYTHING".

3. SINGH SAID THAT THE GOI WAS WELL AWARE OF THE CONCERN FELT IN PAKISTAN ABOUT THE AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS. HE SAID THAT GIVEN THE BACKGROUND OF THE NEW GOA LEADERS, IT WOULD BE NATURAL TO EXPECT THAT THEY WOULD RAISE THE PAKHTUNISTAN ISSUE. HE FELT, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRIMARY NEED OF THE NEW REGIME WAS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POSITION AND TO DEVOTE ITSELF TO DOMESTIC MATTERS, AND HE SAID HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE ANY EARLY HOTTING UP BY KABUL OF PAKHTUNISTAN. THE POL COUNSELOR ASKED SINGH, WHO ALSO HANDLES PAKISTAN AND IS LEAVING TODAY (MAY 5) FOR ISLAMABAD TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHEDULED TRADE TALKS THERE, IF HE EXPECTED WHILE IN PAKISTAN TO DISCUSS AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE GOP. HE SAID HE HAD NO PLANS TO DO SO, BUT DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE MATTER COMING UP.

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4. FURTHER ON REACTION IN PAKISTAN, SINGH SAID THAT THE KABUL DEVELOPMENTS WERE LIKELY TO HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON BHUTTO'S CHANCES OF AVOIDING EXECUTION. HE THOUGHT THAT THE GOP WOULD BE FEARFUL OF PRO-BHUTTO LEFTIST FORCES IN THE PAK MILITARY POSSIBLY FOLLOWING THE LEAD OF THE AFGHAN MILITARY, AND WOULD NOT WANT BHUTTO AROUND AS A POSSIBLE RALLYING POINT. HE NOTED IN THIS CONNECTION WHAT HE TERMED SOVIET SUPPORT OF BHUTTO. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT FOLLOWING THE KABUL EVENTS THE IRANIANS AND THE SAUDIS WOULD BE MUCH LESS INCLINED TO CALL FOR BHUTTO'S CLEMENCY. (ALL OF THESE THOUGHTS WILL DOUBTLESS HAVE OCCURRED TO OBSERVERS IN PAKISTAN, BUT WE FOUND IT INTERESTING THAT THE INDIANS ARE NOW THINKING IN THESE TERMS.)

5. SINGH GREATLY WELCOMED WORD THAT THE USG WOULD PROBABLY AFFORD RECOGNITION TO THE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ON MAY 6 WHEN THE GOA REOPENS FOR BUSINESS FOLLOWING THE MUSLIM WEEKEND. DISCUSSING THE EARLIER DECISION OF THE GOI TO RECOGNIZE, HE SAID THAT AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN INDIAN INTEREST IN OFFERING "ANOTHER PEG" IN ADDITION TO THE COMMUNIST BLOC. HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS MIGHT GIVE THE

AFGHANS A GREATER SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE AND COULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO ADOPT MORE NON-ALIGNED VIEWS. THE PROBABLE US ACTION WOULD ALSO IN HIS VIEW HELP PRESERVE THE GOA'S INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION. WE BELIEVE FROM THE TENOR OF THE CONVERSATION THAT HIS SENSE OF SATISFACTION WAS CONSIDERABLY MINGLED WITH RELIEF THAT INDIA WOULD PROBABLY NO LONGER HAVE THE DISTINCTION OF BEING THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRY TO HAVE RECOGNIZED THE NEW KABUL GOVERNMENT. HE DID NOT PROBE ABOUT THE REASONS FOR THE DELAY IN OUR MOVE.

6. ASKED ABOUT REPORTS CIRCULATING HERE ABOUT THE FATE OF THE AFGHAN AMBASSADOR, HAMIDOLLAH ENAYAT-SERAJ, SINGH CONFIRMED THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN DISMISSED BY THE GOA AND THAT COUNSELOR NOWROZ WAS NOW CHARGE. SINGH SAID THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD NOT BEEN RECALLED TO KABUL. HE ADDED THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOI WAS DELIBERATELY NOT PUBLICIZING HIS DISMISSAL. (NEWS LEAKED TODAY INTO THE INDIAN EXPRESS, HOWEVER.) THE AMBASSADOR WAS BEING ALLOWED TO STAY IN INDIA (SINGH DID NOT SAY FOR HOW LONG, HOWEVER) AND THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF HIS BEING FORCED TO RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN. SINGH SAID IT WAS HIS "IMPRESSION" THAT ENAYAT-SERAJ WISHED TO PROCEED TO FRANCE WHERE SINGH UNDERSTANDS HE OWNS SOME PROPERTY.

7 COMMENT: WHILE THE INDIANS ARE OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS AND MAY IN THEIR CONVERSATION WITH US BE SEEKING TO PUT FORWARD A LESS DISMAYING CONSTRUCTION OF THEM THAN THEY ACTUALLY SENSE, WE GET NO IMPRESSION HERE, AS THE GERMANS HAVE REPORTED (BONN 8279, QUERIED IN STATE 114243) THAT THE COUP HAS SERIOUSLY SHAKEN THE GOI. AMBASSADOR HECK'S REPORT OF HIS MAY 2 CONVERSATION HERE WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA, BEING REPEATED TO THE DEPARTMENT, ALSO FAILS TO CONVEY ANY SENSE OF ALARM. THE INDIANS WILL DOUBTLESS BE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS IN KABUL CLOSELY, AND WITH PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOUTH ASIAN STABILITY WHICH THE DESAI GOVERNMENT HAS SO ASSIDUOUSLY SOUGHT TO FOSTER. WE WILL, OF COURSE, BE COMPARING FURTHER NOTES WITH THEM. IN THIS CONNEKTION, WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT EMBASSY ISLAMABAD POLITICAL OFFICERS WHO KNOW I. P. SINGH SEEK TO GET TOGETHER WITH HIM IN PAKISTAN. HE WOULD DOUBTLESS VALUE ANYTHING WE CAN APPROPRIATELY PASS ON TO HIM ABOUT PAK REACTIONS TO WHAT IS GOING ON ACCROSS THE DURAND LINE, AND HE MAY HAVE FURTHER THOUGHTS FOLLOWING HIS CONTACTS WITH THE GOP.

GOHEEN

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